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A LIFE, LOVE

AND OTHER POEMS



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A LIFE, LOVE
AND OTHER POEMS.

a

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A LIFE, LOVE *AND OTHER POEMS*

b

BY
R. F. T.

RMT

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE
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DEDICATION.

O THOU, whose loving selfless life
Hath borne with mine in every mood,
Claim this, if there be aught of good,
For all of mine is thine, true wife.

2 k
49X

PREFATORY NOTE TO "LOVE."

SOME word of explanation, or even of apology, seems called for in adopting a form of verse and an arrangement so intimately associated with our great Elegiac Poem, "In Memoriam."

A long and loving familiarity with that noble work has shown the writer that in no other form could he, so agreeably to himself, find expression ; and therefore, at all risk, he ventures, in the spirit of admiration, to follow haltingly upon the path lying before him.

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A L I F E.

B

PART I.

DEATH-IN-LIFE.

MAD bells a-clashing from mossed tower merrily,
Pealing in joy, wildly, recklessly, free ;
Showers of white roses, and crisp voices cheerily
Wishing good luck to my darling and me.

Such was my dream. Did it reach to fruition ?
How can I tell, for the days are long past ?
How, when the truth seems less true than the vision,
Now that my soul is unclouded at last ?

Still, as I try to recall the strange story,
Seems the far past and the present but one,
Faintly illumined with slow-dawning glory ;
Veiled like the sun in the fulness of noon.

Yet I remember, th' awaked brain remembers,
 Murmurs of water, a voice by the sea,
 Seen through the mists of a score of Decembers
 Glories of summer unfaded for me ;

An autumnless summer : with winter succeeding
 Close in the wake of its glory and glow ;
 An Eden of beauty, unwaning, unfading,
 Passing at once to the dumbness of snow.

Sails a white crescent through blue deeps of heaven ;
 Sails a white crescent in blue deeps, ah me !
 Scarce could we tell which was stiller that even,
 The face of the sky or the face of the sea.

Voice by the water that reacheth me ever,
 Low, with the lapping of waves on the shore :
 Murmurs of eld that come faintly, but never
 Change in their message to me any more.

Hush not twin voices nor heed the commotion,
 Heed not the changes of time and of sea,
 Hush not sad voices, from lips and from ocean,
 Still through the distance speak ever to me !



How like a portrait some master has painted,
Seen through the smoke and the dimness of years,
Looketh a face from the shadow untainted,
Chastened in beauty by sorrow and tears !

Fade not, sweet face, if a dream yet be lasting ;
Wane not, sad face, with thy mem'ries sublime ;
Thou, with thy mem'ries and sorrows unwasting,
Look out for aye from the canvas of time.

Bright days a-passing but each tinged with sorrow,
Sorrow mysterious that no man may tell,
Wild fears of *something* awaiting the morrow,
Soon in its turn to bear yesterday's spell.

Light, softly saddened, through white curtains stealing,
Touching the face of my saint in her sleep ;
Worth, to unworth, in its beauty revealing,
Bearing on moon-beams a call from the deep.

Ye who would tell of the canonized many,
Write ye Saint Ellen among your white names !
Write her as one fair and spotless as any
Lighted to rest by Domitian's flames.

Fair virgin spirit, how clean thou appearest ;—
 Starlight to vapour thou seemest to mine—
 Sadly I know that thy nearest, thy dearest,
 Showest all black by that whiteness of thine.

Low roll and murmur of water receding,
 Slow-moving rhythm it soundeth to me ;
 Undertone plaintive of passionless pleading,
 Broken again by a call from the sea.

Pure are the blue walls the silent moon clambers ;
 Pure the still earth where her white currents flow ;
 Could they but wash through my soul's dismal chambers
 Then were they fairer ? but how can I know ?

How can I know ? there are clear voices falling,
 Borne through the night on the moonlight to me,
 Sweetly they call me ; again, 'tis the falling,
 Tear-like, of whispers that come from the sea.

Fair face thou seemest all-haloed with glory,
 How shall I dare to remain at thy side ?
 Seek I the shore, where the ocean's edge hoary
 Turns on the sand, and grow worthy my bride.

Flame-whitened fingers that trace out our story,—
Mystical letters on tablet of sky
(Ah ! could we read them !) unveil your weird glory,
Spell out the doom that I know draweth nigh.

Fair moon from white web of vapour escaping,
Look on a soul in the black web of sin,
Ceaselessly ever in agony, shaping
Forms from the chaos of vision within.

Rolling of waters and coldness of ocean ;
Rolling of cloud-waves and coldness of sky ;
Rolling of brain in its tortured emotion ;
Coldness of limbs—of heart—soul—and I die.

Die—why not die ? Strangely folk talk of dying,
Meaning we pass from *that* life into *this* ;
Die from the frenzy, the anguish, the sighing,
Live to beatitude, silence, and bliss.

PART II.

LIFE-IN-DEATH.

STILL, sweetly still, no longer wild storms vex,
Nor any more
The driven soul, safe-moored, hath fear of wrecks
On this sweet shore.

Is't life or death? Life past all dread of death,
Beyond the roll
Of voices, scarce the wafting of a breath
From soul to soul.

Mountains behind us, bearing each a crown
Like frosted ore,
And shedding silver tears, that trickle down
And reach the shore.

Th' eternal sea before us, in the light
 Of early sun
Shadow and reflex of the hills, by night,
 Glory of moon.

A silent sea, whose soft lips ever press
 The silent sand,
Eternal, changeless, love, one long caress
 Of sea and land.

Calm mountains, conscious of their glory, swathed
 In ferny sheen
And steeped in sunlight, burning not, but bathed
 In living green ;

Clear rippling golden sun-waves passing through
 The feath'ry forms,
Gemm'd opalescent, with undrying dew
 And tears of storms,—

Storms such as lash the earth but may not break
 Our sacred sleep,
Yet rolling o'er us, in their weakness shake
 And feebly weep.

Low clouds, like incense, float beneath the trees
And fall and rise,
And bear their dower of whispered messages
From yearning skies.

Here rest we, where across our pleasant land
No sorrows fall,
To me 'tis just the hollow of His hand
Who orders all.

And sometimes, in those folded mists that pass
In solemn grace,
I see, but dimly, as in darkened glass,
A sweet sad face :

But yesterday—I think 'twas yesterday—
It came not sad,
Sweet as of old, with sorrow passed away,
Not wholly glad,

But calm, with calmness most divine and fair,
Nor pale, nor wan ;
A face, like one that sleepeth in the air
With moon-beams on

In tender touches ; all the hair suffused
With glory-beams ;
As, long ago, a sweet fair face was used
To come in dreams :

In dreams, strange dreams, and always with the roll
Of summer seas,
And white moon looking down like sainted soul
And guarding these,

And ever passing on her noiseless way
Through wondering stars,
Night's queen and bride, whose locks about her lay
In silver bars.

So came it here to me : the same sweet face,
And not the same,
Then sweet and sad : now sweet and girt with grace
Of gentlest flame.

Slow wanes the day and glideth on the night
I hold so dear ;
It cometh softly, perhaps the blessed sight
Is drawing near.



O folded cloud, unfold ; I know thou hast
A treasure there !

O folded cloud, thou bearest from the vast
My vision fair !

O weird white rolling cloud, o'ershadow me,
Thy white wings list ;
Unveil thy heart of hearts that I may see
The precious gift.

* * * *

The same sweet face ; the same calm eyes, the same
All but the woe,
Their tears, now priceless pearls, in that clear flame
That orbs them, glow.

My dream, my dream, again : my soul is thrilled
With blest surprise,
And fain would question of the woe that filled,
Of old, those eyes.

But they divine the words my awe-hushed breath
Still fails to give,
And falls the answer, "This is life, not death,
I died to live."

O rolling cloud in incense-smoke expire,
Where lieth deep
The mountain's shadow, thou hast roused desire
From dreamless sleep.

Faint, floating memories reach me, as thy breath
That sweepeth past,
And beareth tokens of the living death
To deathless vast.

So, ever death-in-life shall yearn to see
Our living land,
And grasp the skirts of immortality
With faltering hand.

Still, sweetly still, no longer tempests come,
But mystic forms
Float vapour-borne across our silent home,
Devoid of storms.

O mountains, wide your arms protecting spread,
And thou, O sea,
Complete the circle of our blest and dread
Security !

PART III.

THE AWAKENING.

I.

FADED, all faded, gone the ore-crowned hills ;
The mute and still illimitable sea,
And hushed the murmur of the distant rills
That promised music through eternity !
All faded, faded, e'en the mists are riven
And hang like tattered robes against the sky,
And wrecked the home of rest, the silent heaven,
Where I had thought for evermore to lie !
I dreamed I dreamed, and in that inner dream
I saw all things fade from me, then I woke,
And all was as before, no shadow-stroke
Nor touch of dimness on the lightest beam.
But I am truly wakened now and see
That inner dream and this are truth to me.

2.

Where is the face that came to me in sleep,
In that strange restful sleep I fancied death,
Within the inmost circle of the deep
That, closing, stilled the nigh-suspended breath ?
Sweet face where art thou ? Lo ! thou camest first
In that old life, so beautiful, so sad,
With soft soul-music ; then they whispered, " Mad,"
And thou reflectedst all thou deem'dst of worst :
Again, thou camest in the silent home
Wearing a chastened loveliness of woe,
And heaven-born pity ever with thee came ;
And, once again, all girt with silver flame,
And from thy lips the clear-toned cherished flow,
Like sweet bird-carols when the morn has come.

3.

Speak once again sweet voice from out the cloud !
Voice from that world of stillness speak to me !
O sweet low voice not ever silent be,
If thou canst bring no comfort, then, speak loud
In rushing torrent ! Though the waters be
But bitter let me thirst not utterly !
O form, as dear as voice, how once ye shone
From out the stooping cloud and then wert lost,
Yet left behind a light (as meteor tost
Through blackness leaves its milky pathway shown
As witness on the wondering face of night) ;
But now 'tis faded, those dear lips have ceased
To utter comfort " to a mind diseased,"
That yearns to breast the nearing flood of light.

4

New men, new faces, with a ceaseless hum
Of unfamiliar voices on mine ear,
At distance seeming, and yet uttered near,
Strange and unmeaning unto me they come ;
And I reply but vaguely, or am dumb,
Or, when I know the burden, answer make
Of such small things as constitute the sum
Of those small lives that on the silence break.
One voice, albeit in whispers, would be heard
Across the gulf of space, but that is still,
And though I hearken for the lightest word
It cometh not. And everyday the hill
Its shadows gathers, like a mighty pall,
And lifeless sunbeams on the ocean fall.

C

5.

Lo, I have seen a face so like to thine,
Can he who drew it e'er have looked on thee ?
A face so full of sympathy divine,
And shadowing forth a true soul's agony ;
An utter self-forgetfulness of woe,
And mute with inexpressible despair,
Yet with such loveliness beyond compare,
In that soul-beauty, as the angels know.
The master saw thee where the ivied wall
Nor hid thy shadowed beauty, nor betrayed
Where watchful leaves in tender touches played
And wove their veil of mystery over all.
And oh, how like that ivy's help is this,
Which thou hast given from out thy feebleness.

6.

“ Dead, and we dare not tell him,” so the breath
Of men is borne me, while one whispers low,
“ The world is poorer, having lost her worth.”
Spake she not truly, “ This is life, not death ” ?
And know I not her fealty?—ah, I know
That she were with me if at all on earth.
Friends, I beseech you, if ye pity me,
Lead me where ye have laid her. I am past
All passion, like a spent and broken blast
That once wrought wreck but now moans helplessly.
One said “ her worth,” but where is any one
Who knew it as I knew it? See, I bring
My poor tear-tribute for an offering
To greet your kindness. Leave me here alone.

7.

“ Lo, here thou liest, and I lay my head
Beside thee, as of old, upon the grass
And thou art silent ; clear bell-voices pass
From yon grey tower, and reach us, and the dead
Alone are watchers with my love and me.
From morn till noon the shadow of the tree
Falls lightly on thee, and at eve the tower’s
Cool shade steals out to this still home of ours,
(For any spot is home that holdeth thee,
In precious keeping, till all shadows flee) :—
Speak, dearest, once, from out thy blessed state : ”
So spake I ; then an answer fell, as light
As snowflake falling through a silent night
On face uplifted, this was all, “ I wait.”

8.

“ The world is poorer, having lost her worth ; ”
The world is richer having known her love ;
And I, with footsteps ever swifter, move
Through lessening distance to that other birth,
Which men call death, the nearing gate of life.
“ Move on to death and silence,” thus, they say ;
“ Move on to living converse,” I reply,
“ To those calm voices past the hum of strife ;
To scorchless sun-waves where no shadows stray ;
To living forms that have no thought to die.”
The earth is richer. Where the sunbeam falls
The fruits are riper, flowers more richly bright,
Nor lose their beauty when the loving light
Is drawn again within the golden halls.

9.

The old grey tower ! again my early dream—
And here, where flowers fell, a flower lies
More fair than aught were scattered ; still the skies
Above us bend, as then, with summer gleam.
I speak, I look, upon the past as though
Once more 'twere present, and in fancy seem
To lose the margins of Life's narrow stream
And make a sea of Time, whose waters show
A sheen of glory hiding gulfs of gloom.
But, from the mystery of that awful deep,
A voice no more a whisper of the tomb,
But like a voice that stilleth them that weep,
Comes ever to me now, in accents great
With comfort, this is all, “ I wait ; I wait.”

10.

Thou art not, dear, so very far from me ;
Thou seemest nearer than thou wert the day
Thou spakest to me in the quiet home :
And may I not a little closer come
In sweet soul-converse ? May I hear thee say,
“ Thou nearest ever as the shadows flee
Before the daybreak that thou knowest of ” ?
So would I hear thee speak—if that might be—
Yet am I well contented with thy love
That faileth not, as I draw nigh to thee.
So pass the months of waiting since that day
When, once again, the tumult silence broke
With loveless discord, and my Sorrow woke
To know herself—and while the time away.

III.

Say, have I not communion with thy soul
Across the deep of space—to thee no space
Nor any deep at all? Have I not felt
The evening breathings on my forehead melt
And known them for thy kisses? From thy place
Hast thou not given some earnest of that whole
I would know fully? Thou wert with me, dear,
In that first whirl of passion; then again
In sweetest dream I often knew thee near;
And now I need thee most—in aching pain
Of loneliness elsewhere—I feel thee here,
And dearer to my soul than summer rain.
So help me ever with that love of thine
Across the years till it be one with mine.

PART IV.

HOPE.

I.

WHITE-ROBED, star-crowned, shining Three,
Bending o'er the silent dead,
Faith and Hope and Charity,
Lead me where I would be led !

God-born maidens given to man,
Spirit-brides to all who list,
Scattering clouds that veil His plan,
Lighting beacons in the mist.

Star-browed maiden, clear-eyed Faith,
Counting not the feeble hours ;
Ever, from the dust of Death,
Seeing blossom living flowers.

Thou, who, past the gloom, canst see
Distant lights to which we grope
Through the darkness trustfully,
Star-browed maiden, radiant Hope.

Thou, whose power nor great nor small
Knoweth to its full degree—
Hoping all, enduring all—
Star-browed maiden, Charity.

Ye who, like Orion's zone,
Shine from heaven, O starry Three,
Dwell with me, as ye were one,
Faith and Hope and Charity.

2.

With weary wings,
Tired dove, thou seekest rest in vain,
In fruitless wanderings,
Between the archèd sky and watery plain :
Lone dove, lone dove,
No rest for thee but with thy waiting love.

No rest for thee ;
No feathered crest of mountain wood
Canst thou at distance see
'Twixt cloudless sky and waste of shoreless flood :
Lone dove, lone dove,
One waiteth still to welcome back thy love.

No rest on earth :
Beat high, true heart, for thou art come
To where a hand put forth
Will take thee, tired-winged wanderer, back to home :
Lone dove, lone dove,
Lone dove no longer, thou hast found thy love.

Tired soul of mine,
Blank sky above, beneath thee earth,
Where sunbeams never shine
With those old glories that they once put forth :
O weary soul
No rest till thou hast reached the nearing goal.

Beneath the tree
Thou hoverest—bird of ravished nest—
Moaning continually
And finding not, yet drawing near to rest :
O weary soul
Thou hearest still the surging time-waves roll.

Twixt light and dark
Thou waitest—joy ! thou yet shalt win
Thy rest, when from His ark
God's hand put forth shall take thee, tired one, in,
And, O glad soul !
Thy broken joys shall be again made whole.

3.

The face of my love like an angel came
Silently down the night,
Haloed about with a silver flame
Filling her tresses with light.

A look and a smile, and her soul was poured
Deep into mine as I lay,
As the light of love, in her sweet eyes stored,
Awoke like the birth of day.

Then I spread my arms through the empty night,
As sweet sleep slid down from above,*
And I knew, when I waked in the dawning light,
My spirit had met its love.

4.

The world was white,
A little snowdrop reared its snowy head :
The world grew dark, it sunk within its bed
Away from sight :

It lieth low,
And gathers beauty, till again the earth
Is pure enough to usher in its birth
With robe of snow.

The world seemed white,
A snowdrop that I knew her head uprose :
The world grew dark, she sought again repose
Beyond out sight :

* "The gentle sleep from Heaven
That *slid* into my soul."
(Rime of the Ancient Mariner.)

But blossometh,
With fadeless beauty, where the angels see,
In that white world,* her spotless purity,
Which knows not death.

5.

A voice from out the gathered years
Proclaimeth, while One lays them by,
With comfort, "They that sow in tears
Shall reap" (O harvest blest !) "in joy."

O harvest rich with precious fruit ;
O comfort, though our hearts will bleed,
O heavenly flowers from earthly root
Where we have sown the bitter seed !

O comfort thou art near akin
To sorrow ; thy true hand is laid,
With whispers to the deeps within,
Most gently on the lowest head.

* "White World"—a beautiful Welsh term for Heaven.

6.

Little child that playest here,
Where the yew's dark shadow waves,
Little child, without a fear
Playing in among the graves.

Bring your dolls and bring your toys,
Come and sit beneath the tree,
For to you belong the joys,
As the sorrows unto me.

We are playmates dear and true,
So we must our secrets share,
Very old am I to you,
You to me are very fair.

Lapt in shadow near us lies
One I love in slumber deep,
But she heareth not the noise,
For she lies so sound asleep.

Child, I think when she was young
She was even such as you ;
With a little prattling tongue,
And a little love as true.

Child, God grant that when the bells
Clash for you so wildly free,
You may prove to some one else
What my darling was to me.

We were playmates, little one,
But she had a sorrow deep,
So they laid her softly down
Till she cried herself to sleep ;

Sleep that wakes not till the dawn
Break at last in morning clear,
But the evening draweth on
When I sleep to wake with her.

7.

Brooklet, with a ceaseless song,
Sadly sweet its melody,
Bearing one poor leaf along
Swiftly, surely, tremblingly.

Withered leaf that would not stay,
Nor the lily blossoms see,
Since a flower was plucked away
That was blooming close to thee.

Thou, O brook, with every hour
Bear along thy leaf with thee
Till it find again the flower
In the bosom of the sea.

8.

Belovèd mine,
Waiting and watching from the closèd gate
I know thee, while I hear the loved “I wait”
From lips of thine.

True spirit blest,
On Time’s stream thou a withered leaf canst see
That nears the ocean of Eternity
Where thou hast rest.

Across the years
(As steals a mother’s hand), from out the cloud,
Thy promise finds me when my head is bowed,
And dries my tears.

I know that thou,
By that old truth told once in those dear eyes,
Beside the trysting-gate of Paradise
Art waiting now.

Beneath the hum
Of voices thy clear whisper reaches me
With comfort, while I fain would answer thee
 To thy blest home
With rapture—but the night is drawing late,
I pause and listen for the opening gate
To greet its sound, and, to thy loved “I wait,”
 Reply, “I come.”

LOVE.

TO LOVE.

i COR. XIII. 13.

LAST of the Three yet first of all ;
Thou comprehendest Hope and Faith ;
Thou livest past the death of Death,
And blossomest when blossoms fall.

Eternal Love, thou comest here
With heavenly light upon thy wings ;
Thou movest 'midst familiar things,
That catch thy gleams when thou art near.

All meanest gifts to gold are turned
By thy sweet presence ; graces meet
And lie like flowers about thy feet,
Homely and poor, by thee unspurned.

All natures yield—the worst, the best—
To thy most subtle alchemy,
The noble from the base, and free
Themselves from self, at thy behest.

Though overweighted, dragged in dirt,
Thy whiteness reasserts its hue ;
Thou, if not scathless, passest through
All wrestling with no mortal hurt.

Nay, more, thy foes, in falling, bless
Thy power of victory, as they feel
Thy contact strengthens ; bruises heal ;
And conquests end in blessedness.

Wounded within thy friend's house, still
Undaunted, thou, for their behoof,
Yet tarriest till their niggard roof
Is blest by that it counted ill.

And this to these who scorn thee ! what
To those who fullest welcome give,
Who living love, and loving live,
Nor deem it life where thou art not :

Souls that have felt the angel's touch ;
Souls that a Presence oft has stirred ;
Souls that, perchance, have sinned yet heard
"Forgiven, for they lovèd much : "

O what to these ? A larger share
(To him that hath shall still be given) :
A glimpse of heaven still opens heaven,
And longing almost takes us there.

O highest grace, all gifts above,
When from the heights that none may see,
God issued in humility
And took thy name and came as Love.

Last, greatest, of the glorious Three,
Thy warmth and light to me be sent,
That words, not wholly impotent,
Full of thyself may rise to thee.

I.

LOVE'S ONENESS.

The love of "man and bird and beast,"
Though varied in its onward course,
And in degree, has common source—
'The greatest but a greater least.

From one deep fount, one shoreless sea
(Before, no death ; behind, no birth),
Whence all returns, it issues forth—
The bosom of Immensity.

II.

RESPONSIBILITY.

MAN, dwelling here with beast and bird,
And working wreck with lesser loves
By stronger will, unconscious moves
Beneath a heaven where all are heard.

He, dumb creation's head and priest,
Should he, alas ! himself be dumb
And blind and deaf what sorrows come,
What joys are lost, to great and least.

He lives not to himself nor dies
Unto himself, he causeth moan
Or waketh gladness, not alone
He walks beneath impartial skies :

To him is turned imploring eye,
Beseeching gesture, voiceless speech
Of cringing attitude, that reach,
Too often, but his vanity.

“ He prayeth best who loveth best ; ”
Ah ! truth, this power of loving grows
To power of prayer, and he who knows
To love, knows best where love may rest.

III.

THE MEASURE.

Perchance the stature of the man,
In Eyes that see not as we see,
Is just his love's capacity—
The standard of a nobler plan.

Perchance the muscle or the will ;
The subtle brain ; the steady arm ;
The beauty seen in face or form ;
The cunning fingers' rapid skill ;

The gift to plan a perfect whole ;
The grasp of small or great events,
Are only love's embellishments—
Soul-garments, lacking still the soul.

Who knows, a loving child may be,
In yonder world where all is clear,
Seen greater than the loveless seer,
Who here seemed nigh a deity !

Who knows? Who knows? Where much is hidden,
This truth, I think, is plain at least,
The loveless soul, at Love's high feast,
Will be the marriage guest unbidden.

IV.

LOVE'S SYMBOL.

Is love from form inseparate ?
May not the soul be truly loved
For its own self, that we are moved
So deeply by its outward state ?

We seem to love but what we see ;
Can this be so ? or is the form
The symbol only of a charm
Too deeply placed for scrutiny ?

What priceless beauty may we find,
To us alone revealed and given,
As gazers on the lower heaven
Know yet the heaven of heavens behind.

None other may the secret share ;
Ours is the sign, the countersign
(Where "mine" is "thine," and "thine" is "mine"),
And love's low speech falls everywhere.

For us, the hidden force that dwells
Within, by mystic influence
Transfers its likeness to the sense,
As fair sea-creatures fashion shells.

V.

LOVE'S IDEAL.

I deem the perfect pattern whole
Is never seen in one on earth ;
That two must fuse their separate worth,
And soul complete its fellow-soul.

I deem no life, since His alone,
The Type of all, to us was sent,
But needs its proper complement
To round it to the perfect one.

No life save His, whose mighty plan,
Before our wistful, doubting eyes,
Portrays love's possibilities—
Type of the woman and the man.

Life unapproachable ! Yet we
May gaze on that we cannot reach,
While unto all, and unto each,
The charge is ever, "Follow Me ! "

Yet sometimes our experience yields
A glimpse of one (O vision sweet)
Who sees the footprints of those feet,
And follows through these lower fields :

Ah, not for us to say how far ;
He only, who unfaltering trod
The pathway to the mount of God,
Knows what its fiery trials are.

VI.

MOTHS.

Does that desire which ends in shame,
To love unconscious tribute pay,
As moths that shun the light of day
Seek yet the light of candle-flame ?

O shrivelled wings, and blinded sight ;
O what a gain and loss is this ;
O what a travesty of bliss,
To find the flame and lose the light.

VII.

EARTH-BOUND.

I know the thoughtless often call
A lower passion by a name
We honour so, and gather shame
For that they scarcely know at all.

Poor hapless ones in piteous case,
Whose highest is a thing so low ;
Who never see the mountain's brow,
Above the clouds that wrap its base.

For them no distant peak exists ;
No spotless crown of virgin snow,
That takes the glory and the glow
From highest height beyond the mists.

Shall these no dream nor mother's love
Lift, where the sullen fog-clouds tost
Conceal no more the blessing lost ;
The good they have no memory of ?

VIII.

SHADOWS.

Despair and darkness, death and doubt,
All cast their gloom across the skies,
And, from our feeble, faithless eyes,
Shut Heaven's sweet light and glory out.

The light, still there, to us no more
Asserts its old supremacy ;
What once we saw we cannot see,
Though God is where He was before.*

The light still there : the shadow here :
But who may leave the jealous gloom ;
Who quit the chamber of the tomb,
When Life and Love have left him there ?

* "But think that God ys ther He was."—JOHN LYDGATE.

Bound hand and foot with grave-clothes : night
About him in the silent earth,
Until the Lord-of-Love's "Come forth!"
Shall call again to life and light.

IX.

TYPES.

Three gifts, of light, of life, and love,
All symbolize, in their degree,
The Source of all, and surely we
May through them see His Spirit move.

The light which floods the earth and sky ;
The "Light which lighteth every man,"
Proclaim the unity of plan,
The oneness in diversity.

Life, which all nature permeates
In ceaseless flow, whose source we deem
With Thee, the Life, the Fount, the Stream,
From whence all being emanates.

That gift of love whose crowning bliss,
Whose most divine beatitude,
Is not its own, but other's good,
And stores its sweetness up for this.

Light, life, and love, Thy gifts we see
(But Thou art greater than them all),
Who hearest when we yearning call
For something that will show us Thee.

X.

“WHAT REWARD HAVE YE?”

“What if this excellence you crave,
A dream of love, with life should end,
And this brief pathway only tend
Through darkness to a senseless grave?

“What if this insubstantial dream
Be but a thing of days and hours,
With gladness as of summer flowers;
Or flies, that sport above the stream

“ Through some small fragment of a day
On gauzy wings, while underneath
Sweeps ever on the tide of death,
Alike unheeding toil or play ?

“ A hundred years, and where will be
This love of thine, this rapture high ?
The green of earth, and blue of sky,
Will gladden those who follow thee.

“ Why struggle ? What can fruitless strife
With evil, prudish joys, avail ?
I count that fair is one with frail,
And counsel drain the wine of life.”

As sudden clouds in spring-time come
And touch some fair sun-lighted hill
With shadow, and the air grows chill,
These whispers reach me—I am dumb.

As sunbeams, with undaunted strength,
Some fissure find in gathered gloom,
And flood the hill and fill the room,
My heart’s true answer comes at length.

“ ‘ What if this dream should end in dust ? ’
 Such is your burden, even then
 ’Twere surely best to die as men,
 As lords of self, than slaves of lust.

“ ‘ Love ends with life.’ I yield, but here
 Agreement ceases : God’s own breath
 And highest grace know naught of death
 In passing to a higher sphere.

“ I count that nothing good and pure
 (As nothing evil) lives unfelt,
 And, when a hundred ages melt,
 The impress of a love is sure.

“ ‘ A hundred years ;’ this life, this love,
 Will still be young. Eternal truth
 Dwells always in eternal youth,
 Albeit a hundred æons move.

“ O better blank and sightless eyes ;
 And better death (if that might be),
 Than sight which can but frailty see
 In that last gift of Paradise.

“Thy counsel? Yes, the hours go past,
And nears the time of setting sun
When we may take the cup from One
Who keeps His good wine till the last.”

XI.

LOVE'S INFLUENCES.

“Like rain upon the mown grass,” so,
In times of weakness or distress,
My love's love comes with power to bless,
And all the phantoms rise and go.

So, when those gentle whispers come,
And, through the war of tongues, speak peace,
For me all other voices cease,
And Discord's clanging words are dumb.

One touch, but one, has power to move
When this poor heart is beating low,
A touch that it alone can know—
The sympathy of love with love.

XII.

DEATH AND FAITH.

Death, thou art not of life the end,
Nor its beginning ; through thy gate
We pass but to a fuller state,
To which unwilling footsteps tend !

Death, thou art not the end of love,
Nor love's beginning ; thy sharp frost
May ripen, at an awful cost,
The fruit we were so slow to prove !

Death, thou dost limit set to sight,
And, in thy garment's pierceless fold,
Our dearest dust relentless hold
In seeming dawnless, endless, night !

Death, thou art victor till our faith
Itself asserts, nor helpless waits,
But storms with force and fire thy gates,
And lights with love the halls of death !

XIII.

LOVE'S PRISONER.

Whatever depths of black despair
Engulf me, yet, 'tis all to know
I cannot ever sink below
The arms of Love beneath me there.

Whatever heights it may be given
My soul to reach past earthly things,
I cannot leave Love's guarding wings—
The boundless boundaries of heaven.

I cannot lay my head in sleep—
In sleep or in that deeper rest—
But I am pillow'd on the breast
That stilleth all the souls that weep.

I cannot live without Love's breath,
And, in the fields of Paradise
We hope to tread, those dewy eyes
Will greet me through the gate of Death.

So, always, everywhere I move
I bounded am by Love's decree—
A prisoner girt about with sea—
I cannot quit the realm of Love.

XIV.

LOVE'S PHASES.

Love manifest is multiform,
And looking on some lovely phase
Whose sweetness gladdens sombre days,
Like sun gleam after sullen storm,

We fancy we have seen the goal
Of human love and pure desire,
Unconscious of a summit higher,
Still rising from the perfect whole.

What tender touch, what reverent breath,
Can make the love of mother known ?
To all the line of mothers shown
In that sweet type at Nazareth,

To which, we also love to know,
A Type of childhood too was given
In tender Love that came from heaven,
And showed us all must enter so.

The love of husband, love of wife ;
And those that look to these as crown ;
And fainter touches, running down
To children's early dream of life.

The love of father, here the sign
Of that Eternal Fatherhood
Whose every gift and every good
In one stupendous Good combine.

And hers, the sister's (strong and weak),
A brother's keeper, in the power
She gathers, in some quiet hour,
From strength she knows so well to seek.

And that deep brother-love, whose doubt
Yet sees, in love on him bestowed,
Some light that on a treacherous road
He surely yet will follow out.

The love of friends ; adown the years
How, all undimmed, the story runs
Of Saul's and Jesse's noble sons
Who sealed their compact with their tears.

And hers, that other love outpoured
(That hath a promise all its own
Of being known where He is known),
The woman's for her sinless Lord.

So, from that mighty Heart of Love
All streams, of varied force and powers,
Flow out, and so prepare the hours
For that great day to which we move.

XV.

LOVE'S COMPENSATION.

The mother whom we often see
With trouble worn, and bearing trace
Of care upon her furrowed face,
And doomed, we think, to drudgery,

Has yet some secret source of joy ;
Some hidden mine in which she still
Finds compensation for her ill ;
Some gold, nor heeds the gold's alloy.

Perchance with husband weak and poor,
And hearty children, guessing not
(Blest ignorance) how hard her lot
To fight the wolf about the door :

Yet would she not go back again
To less of love and more of ease,
She sees what none beside her sees,
And sets her good above her pain.

O could we look on her aright,
Her plainness would to beauty grow,
And sweet self-sacrifice would show
Her lines of care as lines of light.

XVI.

LOVE'S SECRET.

That life which seems to walk alone,
Or take a simple interest
In trivial matters at the best,
And looks a mystery to none ;

Whose smile the little children seek,
And bring their troubles to an ear
That never grudges time to hear
Because the tale is long or weak :

And sometimes, when a thoughtful mood
Arrests her little prattlers,
They wonder why a life like hers
Is largely spent in solitude :

Why no one else has found the charm ;
No nearer life has shared the love,
That moves where'er her footsteps move,
So self-contained, so sweet, so warm.

O little ones, your little powers
Can never guess, till you too know
The vestal flame that burns below,
So steadfast, through the silent hours.

O hidden fire, your heat pervades
All nature, like the generous sun
That blesses all he looks upon
With influence fadeless though he fades.

That life, that we have thought alone,
Within itself a love enfolds
That ever sweetest converse holds
With love, the reflex of its own.

Those loves know naught of time or space ;
Those loves have bridged Death's chasm o'er,
And, from the near and further shore,
They meet in spirit face to face.

XVII.

THE FLOOD.

How all love points in its degree
To that great passion, virtue, grace,
That dim-seen vision of the Face
That one day we may bear to see.

A rill of revelation here,
And there some stronger currents gleam
From that expanse of love, whose stream
Is bounded by the banks we rear.

Not always. Sometimes bound and bank
Are swept away, all barriers bow
Before the ceaseless mighty flow
Whose waters once we lightly drank,

And thought perhaps in happy mood
(The draught was sweet as pleasant dream)
That we were greater than the stream,
And nothing guessed of power or flood :

And while we mused or idly slept,
Ere yet a heart was lost or won,
The flood was coming grandly on
And silently about us crept,

And all our force of will was gone,
As, waking in an ecstasy,
We knew the stream was more than we,
And hailed the flood that bore us on.

XVIII.

LOVE'S GROWTH.

How scorching heat or chilling frost
Will ripen love ; the fiery breath
Of evil missed or shade of death
May show us what we might have lost.

And in an hour the growth of years,
Well-nigh unheeded by our eyes,
Attains its sweetness, and we prize
The bloom and beauty that it wears.

We take the gift, like that of air,
As ours by right, till sudden blows
A stronger breath which sternly shows
A force without us stirring there.

Or, like that other dower of health,
Which he who has it scarcely feels
Until some failing power reveals
The priceless treasure of his wealth.

A touch, a simple word, a glance,
May stir the core of latent fire
To leaping flame, and bring desire
For vaster sphere of circumstance.

The old routine may seem the same ;
No sign to others of a light,
Now brightest on the starless night—
A hidden, quenchless, vestal flame.

And may it be to others given,
Who know not here the depths, the heights,
That love may trim its feeble lights
To brightness in the halls of heaven ?

XIX.

EVENING.

When at the threshold of the night
I walk alone in summer fields,
And every flower its perfume yields
As offering to departing light,

A weird, mysterious, sense of awe,
I know not in the deeper gloom,
Creeps over me, with touch of doom,
Before the universal law.

Sleep, darkness, death, and in their train
The waking, and the life and light,
Until we see the blessed sight
And these no more come back again.

XX.

FROM DARK TO LIGHT.

How vast all nature seems at night,
When our near view of earth is lost
In shadow, and the great suns tost,
Through darkness, show themselves in light.

When gazing into ether far,
We leave the near and follow fast
With thought and vision to the vast,
Where plunges some receding star.

All things recede ; all fly the face
Upturned, and O how well he knows,
The watcher, of the light that grows
Intenser in a deep'ning space.

Shall it be so when shadows fall
Before that great Epiphany ;
That following on the light we see
We find at last the Light of all ?

XXI.

LIFE'S VICTORY.

I thought if only Death were dead,
If he, whom all men bow before,
Were stricken prone, with power no more
To blanch the cheek and lay the head—

If he no more were king and lord,
Who works his will on man and beast,
Who sat in type at ancient feast,
Or hung an ill-suspended sword—

If only he were buried deep
Beside his victims, what a load
Would fall, where yonder shadowed road
To trembling feet grows rough and steep.

If we might dream of permanence
For aught we do, what added zest
Would make our best a better best,
Sure-founded on experience.

Yet Death *is* more than dead, he lives
A slave, where once he held his state,
A porter at Life's awful gate,
Who entrance to his victims gives.

XXII.

NEW LIFE.

Suppose a man from out the night
And ashes of an ancient tomb,
In some deep-buried city's gloom,
Should pass at once to upper light ;

Suppose that such an one had made
The tomb his chamber ; long had dwelt
With blackness, such as might be felt,
Upon him like a garment laid,

Whose folds about his senses drawn
Had numbed his will, and every ray
Of past experience shut away—
With Hope long dead and Memory gone.

If such a man, whose doubt and dread
Had perished in the realm of use,
Not dreaming he had aught to lose,
Or aught to gain—alive or dead—

If he at length his hand should lay,
As oftentimes in days before,
On that blank wall and find a door,
And sudden issue into day,

And all his better past return ;
And Hope arise from death and live ;
And birds again their carols give ;
And old affections rise and burn :

Would not a vision so unguessed,
Unhoped for, seem a thing so high
He dare not grasp it, but would lie
In trembling rapture, blest—unblest—

And, blind with light and faint with love,
Receive in awe the gracious streams ;
As from his night of hideous dreams
He feels the daybreak o'er him move.

XXIII.

IF LOVE WERE NOT?

What if the springs of love should cease,
And life be loveless ; human eyes
Gleam cold as February skies,
And blankness take the place of peace ?

I think the birds would cease to sing ;
And fairest flowers forget to blow ;
And all the weight of helpless woe
Be borne by every living thing.

What if the springs of love should cease,
And man become a loveless soul ;
Whose visions high should rend, and roll
In one dull round of seeming peace ?

This were true death, if love were lost ;
The silence of a stringless lyre ;
A dead earth, with no heart of fire,
In outer and in inner frost.

Then all were silent, all at rest—
Th' unruffled rest that smoothes the face,
And binds the waters in their place,
And stills the wild lake's heaving breast.

This were no peace—this stillness sealed ;
This were no sleep—this lack of breath :
No peace ; no sleep—but victor Death
Upon his silent battle-field.

XXIV.

SUNSET.

I saw the heavens aflame with light
Of sunset ; lakes of opal green,
With golden shores, and all between
Vast tracts of purple, rosy-bright ;

And deeper hues and points of gold,
And glowing slopes, and liquid fire,
And peaks of unattained desire,
And hollow haunts of light untold ;

And scattered broadcast o'er the sky,
Soft fragments from some golden fleece ;
And all the sight was one of peace—
The peace of silent ecstasy.

And, somewhere, was a mighty heart
Of light, a hidden core of heat,
From whence the fervent glories beat
And flowed with fire to every part.

A sense of latent power was there,
Calm, unimpassioned, full of rest,
In its self-knowledge knowing best
The force that minor forces share.

A vision shown and then withdrawn
Within the folds of Day's eclipse ;
An awful sweet apocalypse
Of one eternal, deathless dawn.

XXV.

SUNSET DREAMS.

Another vision comes to me—
All nature fills, all thought pervades—
Reveals itself, withdraws, and fades
Again into obscurity.

Now all creation palpitates
With throbbing life, which often seems
To seek again the home of dreams,
That lies within the viewless gates:

Those gates that open now and then,
To some, we trust, in time of doubt,
To whom the glory pouring out
Is as a stream to thirsting men.

And some there are who having seen
(Like Arthur's knights who saw the Grail),
Feel darkness now can naught avail
To hide a sign that once hath been :

To them the glimpse, a moment given,
Itself surpasses, and the sight
Is but the herald of the light
Beyond these threshold lamps of heaven :

To them the life and light, that move
In earth and heaven and distant star,
Are but the beatings from afar
Of that great Heart we name as Love.

XXVI.

THE NEAR AND THE FAR.

One sang of Laura praise that stirs
Time's echoes ; one of Beatrice
A vision showed beyond all price,
Inspired by that sweet soul of hers.

That story dear to school-boy days
(When self-less love such welcome has),
Of Damon and of Pythias,
Still wins from us its meed of praise.

Such love, I doubt not, still is given,
Above the light of lurid days ;
But, standing near a beacon's blaze,
We scarce discern the lamps of heaven.

XXVII.

THE SMALL AND THE GREAT.

How often trifles vex the soul,
While great events go grandly by ;
These tiny meteors streak the sky,
While giant suns unnoticed roll.

How often little passions flare
Across our firmament and cease ;
While love's still lamps of light and peace,
In storm and calm, hang ever there.

XXVIII.

IN DAYS OF OLD.

Are those old days for ever gone
When Venus moved amid her doves,
And, playing there, the soft-limbed loves
Made beautiful the summer lawn ;

When all the earth was bright with flowers ;

And all the heaven with blue and flame ;

And on the air rich perfumes came ;

And sweet birds built in quiet bowers ;

And every tree was filled with song ;

And every brook was jubilant,

And poured its silver-noted chant

Where'er its waters moved along ;

And insects hummed ; lithe lizards slid

Through grass and stones in green and gold

Of living colours ; nothing old

Could sense of ageless youth forbid ;

And all things brought their treasures there,

Of matchless beauty, priceless worth ;

And at her feet they poured them forth—

Their goddess and their minister ?

So in the past : and now it seems,

The while we picture this as so,

We deem that old-world gold and glow

Has passed for ever like our dreams.

Is it not rather sight is dim
And rests upon the sombre veil?—
He saw, the ancient, and we fail
To see the beauty, clear to him.

I know that still Love's girdle binds
True hearts to true, and sweet souls yet
Will make us all life's ills forget,
And lift the gloom from shadowed minds :

And still in many a homely home,
'Mid birds and flowers, our Venus moves ;
And round about her knees the loves
Play, heedless of the years to come.

XXIX.

LOVE TRIUMPHANT.

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ Mid birds and flowers ’ and only there ? ”
You ask me. No, I make reply,
Love's kingdom knows no boundary,
And queens of love are everywhere.

In city's heart, on barren plain,
On snowy waste, in golden vale,
Alike is told the ancient tale
In varied version ; Love must reign.

In crowded dens, where fever creeps,
From bed to bed, with fiery breath
That cools before the face of Death,
Where joyless childhood starves and weeps,

Or worse, weeps *not* where long abuse
Of God's good gifts has dried all tears
With fire, not love, and tender years
Seem old in that dread round of use :

Here tenderly some woman moves,
Awaking wonder, or some mood
Of dull compliance—gratitude
She asks not from her loveless loves.

Think not to her the flowers' sweet breath
Is nothing, still in Memory's glades
Their perfume floats nor beauty fades,
Recalled within the dens of death.

To her they come as messages
From distant lands—how far, how near—
And, knowing all, her way is clear
To choose a path in fields like these :

To other eyes with evil stored,
To her a garden, needing care,
That she may tend and gather there
A posy for her waiting Lord.

On arid sand and trackless snow
Love universal holds her sway,
As in the past, and souls obey,
And to a purer influence bow.

XXX.

LOVE AND HOPE.

Pandora, what a dower of ill
Was thine upon thy marriage day—
That box where all life's evils lay
Abiding time to work their will.

Life marred for ever by thy good ;
All curses loosed when thou wert blest—
First mortal, dooming all the rest
To Dead Sea apples for their food

Yes, even so ; but yet remained
Two blessed compensations ; one—
Love—thine already, here begun,
And, with all evil, Hope was gained.

XXXI.

LOVE THE RESTORER.

O Enone and Penelope,
True souls whose faith the bards rehearse
On monuments of deathless verse,
How dear are your sweet names to me.

O faithful souls ; O loving hearts ;
Your trust so long, so sorely tried
At length was surely satisfied—
Your loves have found their counterparts ?

How can it be? shall false be true,
Can broken faith be whole again?
Shall aching hearts be freed from pain?
Can old loves e'er give place to new?

Can that which has been be undone?
Can words once spoken be unsaid?
Can life proceed where life is dead,
Or heat flow from a burnt-out sun?

Can boundless time release the years
That grief has stored, or festal songs
Be free from that old wail of wrongs,
Or smiles destroy all trace of tears?

It seems not : how things transient seem
As lasting ; in another sphere
Will evil, felt as deathless here,
Fall off and show us but a dream?

I know not, guess not, but I know
There is some mighty power in love
To cleanse and heal, and souls may move,
And, through progressive cycles, grow.

XXXII.

RIZPAH.

Mother, whose love no danger knows,
No horror shrinks from, watching there,
As others watch a treasure rare,
The treasure of thy perished sons.

From barley-harvest till the rain,
For them, for thee, sheds pitying tears,
The vulture hovers, swoops and nears,
And prowls the lean jackal, in vain.

Thy loving memory will reclothe
Those wasting forms in noble dress
Of royal princely manliness,
Nor draw from that which others loathe.

Still thine ; by thine own bosom fed ;
From thee their strength ; O mother good !
And Earth contests thy motherhood,
And robs thee of thy cherished dead.

Can naught avail to bring relief?
Thy heart, that only will not break :
Thy awful vigil for their sake :
Thy tearless eyes wiped dry by grief !

Can nothing help thy stricken ones ;
No prayer unframed, no gift at all,
The past with all its ill recall,
And give thee once again thy sons ?

Thy mother's love for them would drain
The cup of death, and more than death,
To bring again the parted breath,
And flush with life those veins again.

XXXIII.

TIME'S CURSE AND BLESSING.

This is Time's curse, to weigh us down,
With eyes averted from the sky
That stretches still its blue on high
Above us, though we smile or frown :

This is Time's curse, to take the glow
From summer lives, and touch our souls
With that earth-fog, that slowly rolls
Across the fairest scene we know :

This is Time's curse, to know the best
Is fading surely while, unmoved,
We suffer all the things we loved
To pass, nor follow in their quest :

This is Time's curse, to over-pass
Life's freshness ; lose the heights of love ;
To cling below and fail above,
And make a bed of withered grass :

Now Time is victor, senses fail
To answer impotent desires,
With no delight in fading fires
That pale as all things mortal pale.

This is Time's curse, but, yet behind,
I know a blessing somewhere waits ;
Our feet are nearing still the gates
To which our aching eyes are blind.

This is Time's blessing, past all worth,
To bring again the love we gave ;
An arm to lead us to the grave
As gently as we led it forth :

'This is Time's blessing, growing near,
That all we counted once as ours,
Unseen, has gained eternal powers
Of life and love more truly dear :

This is Time's blessing, just to feel,
When all is failing, that the true
Awaits us ; old things all made new ;
Old visions permanent and real.

Love seen a moment, *here* its power
Is never gauged nor fully shown ;
But *there* we know it as our own,
In its unfading wealth of flower.

XXXIV.

PAIN.

What is this mystery of pain ?
For blessing or for punishment ?
What mission has it ; what intent ;
And can it ever be in vain ?

Is it some discipline for good ;
Or only here to work us ill ?
Has it a purpose to fulfil,
Forerunning some beatitude ?

Is it a blessing in disguise ;
A friend in some unfriendly form ?
Is there a lull within the storm
To those that cross its boundaries ?

Is it a penalty we pay ;
Or just a sign of special care,
Some pruning for the garden *there*,
Some cutting of the waste away ?

Is it a mark of ancient war,
Of ceaseless feud, that ever so
Pursues its fight, with blow on blow,
To bring us down from what we are ?

Or, is it not a constant sign
That we are more than that we see,
And that immortal self must be
Encompassed with a mortal shrine ?

Does outraged law its power assert,
Avenge its violation thus ;
Or, does the message come to us
With blessing laden, not with hurt ?

Is it a touch of quickened life,
The beating of our prisoned soul,
That will not bear to feel control—
A ceaseless flesh-and-spirit strife ?

Is it our share in Nature's groan
And travail till the night be past,
And that great morning break at last,
And God and Nature be at one ?

Is it—O can it be a rod
Of anger? or a healing touch
Of that Physician? Shrinking much,
We call it still the Hand of God.

That awful baptism of pain,
And cup of suffering, like His own,
Christ gave to those who asked a throne—
Not surely cruel gift nor vain ;

And unto one the crown was given
Of martyrdom, and one was blest
With that great vision of the rest,
Unresting, of the saints in heaven.

Ah ! surely He hath borne our griefs,
Our sorrows carried, He has known
And made our pains His very own,
And from His treasury dealt reliefs.

O mystery of doubt and pain,
Whence is it? wherefore? who may say
Till God shall roll the clouds away,
And all the hidden things be plain?

O mystery of pain and doubt,
How can we ever solve it here ?
How hope to feel our powers clear
To work the mighty problem out ?

How can we dream the *why* to prove ?
At most we guess it, yet we know,
Beyond all fears, it must be so,
That somewhere moves a Hand of Love.

XXXV.

WRESTLING.

The light is coming ! Light will come
And meet us while we toil and shrink,
Yet strive to reach it—through some chink
The light must touch us from our home.

How long the way is ! longer too
By our own making, wandering wide,
And helplessly, where paths divide ;
No glimmer yet to help us through.

And sometimes, 'twixt the dark and light,
We meet the Man and wrestle there,
Convulsed in agony of prayer,
Unuttered from its very might.

"Thou shalt not leave me ! let the gleam
Of daylight widen. Let the flood
Of fuller morning strike my blood
With life, from its all-living stream—

"Not leave me till thou bless me !" This,
I think, is even why He waits,
For violence to storm the gates
Of entrance to the courts of bliss.

Henceforth, perchance, to bear the mark
Of pain endured, the sign He gave
And set upon His victor-slave,
Who strove for service through the dark ;

Who, striving, won when Nature failed :
Who knew the Man with whom he strove
For blessing, Type and Source of love ;
Who saw God's face and yet prevailed.

XXXVI.

RAPTURE.

I sometimes think that they who miss
The depth of suffering, often lose
The height of rapture, scaled by those
Whose feet have known the dread abyss.

“Out of the deep” the voice has gone
In darkness to the nameless Name ;
And from the summit’s brow of flame
The victor-cry is carried on.

A glimpse of glory in the night,
Just seen an instant, veiled again ;
A thrill of joy across the pain ;
A throbbing of some inward light ;

A thunder-cloud, whose heart of fire
Reveals itself in sudden rifts ;
A vapour that a moment lifts,
And shows the end of all desire :

So in the darkness. What in light,
When wrestling ceases, gaining there
The more than answer to a prayer
Poured forth in agony and night ?

Prayer wholly voiceless now, no boon
To pray for, nothing unfulfilled
Remaining, when the soul was thrilled
With that full blaze of cloudless noon.

Prayer hushed in worship, lost in bliss,
And self forgotten in the gleam
Of that eternal glory-stream
That flows from that high world to this.

So, sometimes to the stricken soul
God's compensations come and show
A something others may not know,
An earnest of a nearing goal.

O mystery of love and pain !
How can we think or sing aright,
Where light is darkness, darkness light,
As God to us is hid or plain ?

XXXVII.

EARTH'S TREASURE.

Thou holdest in thy rugged crust,
Dark Earth, our dearest and our best ;
In thy true bosom there is rest,
And dust can mix with kindred dust.

O Earth, Earth, Earth, we hold thee dear
For that thou keepest, where thy flowers
Bloom from the dust we counted ours,
Whose feet with ours have wandered here.

No more, no more ; ah ! now beneath
Thou foldest them in awful rest ;
Thou dost not mock them ; 'tis thy best
Thou givest, in this living wreath.

O Earth, Earth, Earth, we envy thee ;
We can but bring the gift of tears,
But thine, of flowers, the generous years
Endue with grace increasingly.

XXXVIII.

HEART MUSIC.

Sing, heart, the birds are singing, sing,
For life is young and time is long,
Nay, endless both, and blessed song
Is the expression of the spring.

Sing, heart, the world is singing, lo !
The great song-angel passed along,
And woke the silent lips to song,
And thou, my heart, art dumb with woe.

Sing, heart, the earth renews her years ;
Though yonder mounds our dear ones hide,
She stars them with her “daisies pied,”
And says, “Forget not, yet your tears

“ May catch the light, that not for you,
Nor less for them, has ceased to be,
Whose fulness steeps the crystal sea,
Nor lights alone but passes through.”

Sing, heart, your oneness thus is shown
In truer harmony with these,
Who rest beyond Time's broken seas,
Beyond the dark and dread unknown.

Sing, heart, all nature sings ; the birds
And insects lead thee ; all the air
In sweet vibration trembles there,
With that great song whose notes are words :

Words like that wondrous spirit-speech,
One voice, that, unto each who heard,
Unloosed the clearest, sweetest word ;
The needed message unto each.

Glad Nature touch our tongues with flame,
Nor let us shameful silence keep ;
But add our tribute to the deep,
To swell the song we cannot name.

Sing, heart, it may be thou hast lain
Too long in thankless sorrow ; sing,
And pour in sound the hidden thing
That wakes thee to thyself again.

XXXIX.

SWALLOWS.

Sweet spring returns to us once more,
And on her winds the swallows come,
To greet us in our northern home,
And gain a welcome as of yore.

Dear birds, so fresh from southern skies,
How cold must seem these clouds of ours ;
How bare our land, whose timorous flowers
Still fear to look with open eyes.

Yet, hearts are warm and fires aglow,
And shelter sure, and we would fain
Believe the summer here again,
Before we well have lost the snow.

Sweep from the vault above us, spread,
And dip your wings in yonder stream,
And flash the light, with sudden gleam,
From breast and wing, and burnished head :

Skim past the shadows of the woods,
Rise into light again, nor fear
To cherish household loves, and rear
About our homes your helpless broods.

Why leave us when the leaves are sere?
Why leave us with the shortening days?
All pass, but living memory stays,
And through all seasons love is here.

XL.

NATURE'S MOODS.

Is not the wild storm's spirit one
With that which broods above the calm ;
The loud-voiced thunder's awful psalm
A sweet bird's song in deeper tone ?

I know not, yet sometimes to me
These moods seem Nature's changeful dress,
In which she clothes her loveliness—
One beauty shown us variously.

The many sounds, the shifting keys,
In which her mind itself reveals ;—
Now in the rolling thunder peals,
Now in the still small voice of peace—

All seem from one deep source to spring ;
One living fount, where all are hid,
To issue as occasion bid,
For fitting time, the fitting thing.

And so her garb, now robe of light,
Now deepest purple, wrapping there
That form we know is always fair,
That wears its beauty day and night.

Her voice is always that of love,
In many tones, whose music stirs,
And brings about those feet of hers,
All who within her influence move.

XLI.

LOVE'S WEALTH.

Flowers of the spring, whose tender hues
First touch the scale of colour low,
Scarce warmer than the melting snow,
To deepen into reds and blues.

As skies grow brighter, summer suns
Pour gold along the panting plains,
And warmth and vigour stir the veins
Through which the glow of gladness runs.

Gold in exchange for gold, and blue
To match the azure overhead,
And red, as sunset's brightest red,
And royal purple, hue for hue.

Love answers love, love love begets,
Love's gold is never cast away,
Though hidden many a weary day,
'Tis found, perchance, when daylight sets.

Love love begets, her talents she
In patience trusts, her gold she gives
Ungrudgingly, her gold that lives
And gathers sweetest usury.

XLII.

LOVE'S SUPREMACY.

All things rejoice in beauty—sound,
Or form, or colour, all express
A truth, in outward loveliness,
And girt with all adornment round :

Such beauty as one sees in spring,
When Hope and Faith together meet,
And bring their treasures to our feet,
And woods with love-songs throb and ring :

When every bird and every tree
With love pulsates, and quickened lives
Proclaim their joy, and Nature strives
To lift the gloom and struggle free.

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When human hearts with wilder glee,
And deeper longings, know the truth
That, self-proclaimed in days of youth,
Asserts Love's true supremacy.

O budding world, O living love,
O loving life that, waking so,
Makes all things spring, rejoice, and grow,
And to their full fruition move !

XLIII.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

O bird that, when the primrose pale
Gems bank and copse, from o'er the sea
Bringest thy gift of melody
To greet the spring, O nightingale !

Thy voice at times is touched with woe ;
At times with joy ; a tender tale
Thou tellest, O sweet nightingale !
I listen, and I cannot go.

And now thy note is one of wail ;
What meaneth this ? Make answer, why
Is joy so near to agony ?
Thou knowest both, true nightingale.

What is this mystery of thine ?
O tell me, ere the stars grow pale,
For it may be, O nightingale,
Thy secret is akin to mine.

And thou canst sing ; while I must fail
To utter what my heart contains ;
But thy full burden, joys and pains,
Thou pourest forth, blest nightingale !

Yet memory will at times rehearse
The past too truly, sweet notes quail
Before thy passion, nightingale,
Thy song is then a broken verse.

O mighty love ! O heart so frail
That breakest with its ecstasy !—
I think that thou hast sung to me
Some of thy secret, nightingale.

XLIV.

THE BUTTERFLY.

The butterfly that bursts its shell
And rises, from a mimic death,
To float, upon the perfumed breath
Of June, above some flowery dell,

Must feel within itself some change ;
Some unfamiliar sense of power,
Inherited in that wild hour
That gave it unrestricted range :

So, when the husk of self is riven,
We rise on Love's unfolded wings,
And see the upturned gaze of things,
And float between the earth and heaven.

XLV.

LOVE'S PATIENCE.

Love is impatient ! Nay, the years
She counts as days, and so forecasts
The future, while probation lasts,
That she can find no place for tears :

She knows the power of look and word
To bridge the hours, like sweetest chime
That marks the flying course of time
With music looked for, loved when heard,

And loved when, dying far away,
Its echoes linger, float, and fall,
And rise, in harmony with all
That links to-morrow with to-day.

O time of waiting, not uncheered,
For tokens sweet, from lips and eyes,
Seem openings to that Paradise
To which our feet have daily neared.

XLVI.

THE GLOW-WORM.

There, where the bracken slowly turns
From green to gold, 'neath summer skies
(The gold of all, that few men prize),
The glow-worm's steadfast lantern burns

I saw it in the early spring ;
Now, in the glory of the year ;
In autumn, too, its light was here ;
And count it nigh a constant thing.

It always speaks to me of home
And welcome ; Hope and Memory meet
About its glow, and all things sweet
Spring from its light, that beacons “ Come.”

I know a light in heart and room
So like to this, but truer still ;
It fails not when the nights are chill,
But brighter burns in winter’s gloom.

XLVII.

LOVE’S TREASURE.

“ Say what is thy belovèd more
Than all belovèds ? wherefore prate
Of thy love’s music ? is it great
And others of a feebler score ?

“All love is love, and mine from thine
May differ but in such degree
As scarce disturbs equality,
Or even show the balance mine.

“What more is thy belovèd, say,
Than all belovèds? Wherefore sing
As though thy treasure made the spring,
Its absence brought the winter day?”

Nay, nothing more, but more to me
Than all belovèds; I rejoice
In that I know another's voice
May praise another equally.

XLVIII.

LOVE'S ESTIMATE.

I know not, and can never know,
Which love is greater, thine or mine—
True soul that, through the storm and shine,
Hath held to me, in joy, in woe.

I may not say another's love
Is not as great as thine for me,
Or less than is my love for thee,
Yet scarcely can it greater prove.

It may be that all loves possess
Peculiar treasure, and alone
Some special gift may call their own,
In all its power to soothe or bless :

It may be that the good or grace
We prize so much, so proudly wear,
Is not the gem that others bear,
As fitly, in its honoured place.

Thy tender knowledge of the best ;
Thy finer tact and woman's skill ;
Achieve, without the show of will,
And fill me with a sense of rest

From long experience surely drawn,
That when the darkness gathers most
Thy love is brightest—at what cost
I know not, till the nearing dawn

Shall thy self-sacrifice reveal,
And show aright thy woman's gift,
To find within the cloud the rift,
The music in the thunder-peal.

XLIX.

LOVE'S HARMONY.

O mother praying for thy son !
O son that criest to be free !
We bring our troubles, Lord, to Thee,
And Thou canst make the answer one.

For things divine we yearn and call ;
Thou knowest all our needs, our cares,
And Thou canst take conflicting prayers
And bring a harmony from all.

O mighty, perfect Sacrifice !
O Love that, with Thy latest breath,
Didst wrest the victory from Death
And give us life, Thine own life's price !

Thou givest life ; Thou givest love ;
Eternal both, from Thee they spring,
And unto Thee their treasures bring ;
The Source, the End, to which we move.

L

THE SHAPING OF LIFE.

O can it be love's crown to grieve
For what was once but now is lost ;
To know our treasure by the cost
Of suffering, when our dear ones leave ?

And must it always come to this,
To lose or leave our dearest things ;
To take, or see them take, the wings ;
Ourselves to go or these to miss ?

Can dower of love or doom of pain,
Or any lot that falls to man,
Be aught but part of some vast plan
That compasses his greatest gain ?

Is pain for pain's sake : love for love's :
Or are they, could we understand,
Tools in the Master Workman's Hand,
To fit us to our proper grooves ?

Perhaps to those All-Seeing Eyes
Some pattern of our life exists ;
Some clear portrayal, past the mists,
Of that to which our souls may rise.

LI.

DOUBT AND HOPE.

So have I chanted, all too long,
Love's praise, and multiplied in vain
Words fruitless. Life is full of pain,
And death is near and hatred strong.

Can love bring back the days bygone ?
Can love do more than lightly heal
The wounds of love, that know the steel,
Albeit the sword is long withdrawn ?

Can love upgather water spent?
Can love do more, at best, than hide
Her grief, by spreading garments wide,
Or give for peace a half-content?

Can sullied snow again be fair?
Can touch of love the bloom replace
That lay, God's gift, on that sweet face—
His fruit—how good He saw it there?

Can love the fallen life restore?
Can love atone for past offence,
Or bring again the innocence
That robed us in the days of yore?

Can any love the past undo?
Can any love the future bring
With that old freshness, when the spring
Of life was making all things new?

Can love the locust-eaten years
Wrest from our store of all things ill?
Can love again the channels fill,
Worn by the flow of frequent tears?

We cannot tell, but long and pray
(And hope would weaker doubt disprove)
The purifying flame of love
May wholly burn life's dross away.

LII.

LOVE'S STREAM.

My love is just a little stream,
That threads its way 'twixt stone and stone
At times with song, but oft with moan,
And touched with shadow and with gleam.

Now hollowed to a glassy bath,
That holds the sweet moon's placid face,
And now concealed, but for the trace
Of greener herbage round its path.

Now shadowed by a scar on high,
That frowns above it, with the gloom
Of some old, strange, forbidding tomb,
Whose emblems speak mortality :

But, just beyond the tomb's black gates,
It opens into light so full,
Such rippling sparkle ; who so dull,
But feels the life that palpitates ?

And widens into broad expanse ;
And bears its flowers upon its breast ;
But ever longing still for rest,
Unsatisfied with gleam and glance :

And rolls with gathering purpose on,
Between the banks that curb its flow,
And give it depth, and keep it so,
With steadfast faith, unswerving will,

And through it all a deepening key
Of music other voices stills ;
A growing murmur past the hills ;
A message from the nearing sea.

LIII.

THE SELFLESSNESS OF LOVE.

So have I dreamed Love's waking dream,
And still her spell is round me cast ;
Though all things perish, Love shall last,
And *be*, when these no longer *seem*.

Love is not joy alone, nor pain ;
Love may possess and Love may lose ;
Love must accept and cannot choose
Between a seeming loss or gain.

Is Love to self a minister ?
Looks she not on another's things ?
And all her dearest treasures brings—
Her gold, her frankincense, her myrrh ?

Self-sacrifice ! ah, this is love ;
To wish ourselves accursed, if so
We might but lessen others' woe,
And lift the cross they cannot move.

Who seeks his life shall lose it. He
Who seeks not love, shall find again
The seed he cast, not lost, nor vain,
But multiplied mysteriously :

Shall surely see with open eyes
(No longer blinded with his tears)
His love with all the growth of years,
And glorified, about him lies.

TO LOVE'S SOURCE.

1 JOHN IV. 7.

O Last, O First, to Thee we bow,
From Thee proceed and to Thee tend
All loves, of love the Source, the End,
The Alpha, the Omega Thou !

Thou sendest forth Thy gifts that move
In orbits that return on Thee,
That seek again the primal Sea,
The fathomless Abyss of Love.

Love's Source, love's End, Thou then must be
Love perfect, All-Divine, complete ;
In Thee all wealth of love must meet,
And all our best be part of Thee.

Love All-Diffusive, touching all ;
O blessed hearts, so pure and clear,
That keep the mirrored Image here
In beauty, till the shadows fall.

All love, we know, in its degree,
Has caught some faint reflex of rays,
Some brightness from the jewel's blaze,
Whose heart of light is hid with Thee.

This yearning, when with passion thrilled ;
This lacking note in love's high chant ;
This something more ; this nameless want ;
Can only be by Thee fulfilled.

We rise from what is less to more,
And grasping, with a true intent,
Thy line of love, by sure ascent
Our feet may touch the blessed shore.

Not strange to Thee, our grief, Who kept
Lone vigil on the mountain there ;
Not strange our agony of prayer,
Our stricken love, for Thou hast wept.

O Love, Thou stoppedst at the bier,
And turned a victory, seeming won ;
And to the mother gave the son,
And so asserted mastery here.

One came of old with orbless eyes,
And laid a hand upon our own,
And led us to a feared unknown ;
But Thou hast claimed again the prize :

And Death, but as Thy herald now,
Proclaims to every honoured guest
The marriage-feast and Thy behest,
And lays the faded garments low.

Ah, Lord, what heritage is ours !
We move engirt with mystery,
But could we see as spirits see,
If our poor eyes had subtler powers,

How should we know, when sorrows fall,
When losses crush us, when we cry,
Like helpless children asking “ why ? ”
That yet Thy love is over all :

That what we least can understand,
The darkness sometimes o'er us laid
In silence, is the cooling shade,
And presence of Thy nearer hand !

We love, we lose ; the light we see
Thou showest, soon perchance withdrawn ;
With face upturned we wait the dawn
That shows all light, all love, with Thee.

SHORTER POEMS.

A CHARACTER SKETCH.

SHE loved to gaze upon the stars,
That brighter grew with deep'ning night ;
And sorrowed when the early light
Of morning spread in golden bars.

She cared not for the glaring day ;
But loved the mystery of the dark,
That faded when the soaring lark
Cleft with swift wing the melting grey.

With sweetest music ever thrilled
The blackness ; every mystic sound
In her an eager listener found,
With weird enjoyment wholly filled.

Nor looked she on the foam-flecked flood,
That tumbled down the broken steep,
But bent above the awful deep,
Within the shadow of the wood,

Whose wave some guilty secret holds,
And whispers hoarsely all the day,
And sobs the hours of dark away,
And wraps its prey in blackened folds.

MARGARET.

HAST thou forgotten, then, that one bright night

Long years ago,

When in these arms I held my one delight

(Ah ! since my woe) ?

Hast thou forgotten, then the moon was low,

And touched with light my darling's trembling lips,

But I was held in shadow, that I know,

In token of that drawing near eclipse ?

Thou hast forgotten, yes, the past is past,

O Margaret !

With me alone remembrance still must last,

Thou canst forget :

But all the past is present with me yet,

And memory, seeking like tide-conquered river

Her backward path, reveals my Margaret

Before a broken troth was hers for ever.

At times I ask, is this the Margaret
 Of days gone by;
The light on which my eager gaze was set
 In darkest sky?
She hath her beauty, as of old, but I
 Know she is changèd in the angel's ken,
And I would search through all eternity
 To find my Margaret as I knew her then.

Had I been false to thee, as thou hast been,
 Not with sweet smile,
And hand outstretched to greet thee, had I seen
 Thee suffer while :
Had I been false to thee my coward guile
 Had smitten me with shame upon the face,
And I had paused to hear thy voice the while
 I bowed my head in merited disgrace.

Farewell, O Margaret of the changing faith ;
 'Tis well for thee
Thy first love perished by an icy breath
 While thou wert free

(Or deemdst thyself so) ; may thy latest be
More lasting ; for to thee the hour has come
When changing love were changeless misery,
To thee a stranger in a homeless home.

AMY.

THE ever-floating glory of her hair—

Now streaming out upon the summer wind,
Now hiding half the sweet face nestling there—

And that quick twinkle of her clear blue eye,
Behind the shining golden tracery

That falls adown her neck and is entwined
With wild-flower gems, most delicate of hue,
Wind-flowers, forget-me-nots, and violets blue,

And (peeping out half-hidden by the fold
That binds it willing prisoner) hawthorn bloom,

Whose tender petals mingle with the gold,
And breathe a blessing in a rich perfume;

The rosy lips, and that provoking pout,
Do deck a beauty of so bright a mould,

We gaze unconsciously in quaintest doubt
If such a fairy-form be human-souled.

IDA.

**IMPERIAL Ida ! not by constant flash
 Of liquid beauty doth thine eye command,
 But gazing ever from beneath a lash,
 Silken and sable, with a steadfast glow
 (Not proud, but passionless, serenely pure),
 All men before thy perfect beauty bow.**

**In native majesty thou art secure,
 Thou bear'st no golden sceptre in thy hand,
 And wear'st no diadem about thy brow,
 And yet thy queen-like grace hath greater power
 Than sword-supported royal mandates have ;
 And those long tresses o'er thy forehead wreathè
 A nobler crown than gem-enrichèd gold
 (A glorious night where just one stainless flower
 Shines out, in never-lessening beauty, cold).
 Thou need'st no precious ore, nor priceless stone,
 Thine is a beauty beautiful alone.**

PASSING.

THE days go ever on and on,
And swiftly pass—
The sands of life that early run
Through Time's turned glass :

And these that yet remain are just
The grains that stay
A moment, ere they join the dust
That rolls away.

SUNLESS.

GREY dawn before the horse's fervent feet
Beat flakes of fire from out the cloud-paved road.
Grey dusk that follows in the flaming track
Of flying wheels that spurn the western marge.

Grey dawn, cold, pure, severe and passionless.
Grey dusk, of heat and fury emptied, void
Of hope and yearning pleasures, satiate
With love and hate and all things.

Dusk and dawn

The end and the beginning of a day ;
The end and the beginning of a life
How often, and between the fire and smoke,
The steadfast glory and the sputtering torch.

Dawn, ere the bright twin children, Light and Hope,
The offspring of the Morn, are born to Earth.

Dusk, when the echoes of her hollow courts

Are waked no more with laughter ; Hope is dead,
And Light departed in the flaming car.

Grey dawn ; grey dusk ; then things seem what they are,
With native beauty robed or horror wreathed ;
No added loveliness nor heightened wrath,
No sunny ripples and no folds of gloom,
Tamper with naked truth, but all things stand
Cold as a grey rock in a land of ice.

Dawn ; splinter'd sticks in order, jetty coal
To crown them, waiting for the torch of day.

Dusk ; ashen embers, black and charred remains,
Impoverished of their heat by fiery lips.

Between ; the myriad licking tongues of flame
Unsatisfied, and wreathèd braids of smoke
Unsteadfast, false, in miraged loveliness.

Aspirest thou, O man, for light and heat ?
Art thou an eagle that thou woo'st the sun ?
Aspirest thou, O moth, for candle-flame ?
Thy ashes shall no more arise to life,
But thou shalt know scorched wings and blinded eyes
And enter darkness through the gate of light.

Dawn with the calm, clear brow and dewy smile
Before the battle and the roar of wheels.

Dusk with the bloody streaks upon her face
And on *her* brow "experience" deeply graved
In dusty channels, and her poor wan lips
Parched with the burning drought,

Grey dawn ; grey dusk ;
What endless images of life are yours
(That all may see, but none may tell aright) :
Dawn for life's spring-time, dusk for wasted age,
Noon for the heat of manhood, and deep night
To spread her black wing o'er a lonely grave
Where beat the echoes of a lonely deep.

IN MEMORIAM.

A. M. M.

“And Jesus called a little child unto Him.”—ST. MATT. xviii. 2.

“The peace of God, which passeth all understanding.”—
PHIL. iv. 7.

WE thank Thee. May no breath of murmur stir
The stillness; Father, this is not Thy rod
But Thy most soothing hand; Thou givest her
That which ourselves desire, “the peace of God.”

PENELOPE.

A FRAGMENT.

THE Summer fades and Winter bares the trees,
And Spring reclothes them, and again the heat
And glory of the Summer come and pass,
And Autumn follows with her yellow robes,
But he comes not to me.

Slow wane the hours ;
Slow the sad days and weary years go by ;
And yet not slowly Care's unfaltering hand
Draws furrows on this brow.

Why comes he not ?
He liveth yet ; not in Troy's dreary siege,
Not by th' assassin's hand has he gone forth
To wander through the darkness and the mist.

I know he lives. I feel his life in mine.

The warmth of his great heart still strengthens me,
And I live on.

My lord, Ulysses, come !

Delay not longer, thy Penelope
Is sore beset and waits thy forceful hand
And never-failing sword to rout these men—
These coward men—that hem me round and say,
“ He cannot live,” again, “ and, if he live,
Why comes he not ? ” and then, with faithless eyes
Full of hypocrisy and cowardice,
“ Not so would I ;” they say, “ not thus alone
The time should pass unheeded,” ay, and more,
They vex me with their importunities.

* * * * *

But when thou comest all this leaden time,
This hateful present, will be turned to past
And flooded over with the tide of love.

TIME—A RIVER.

TIME, methinks, is just a river
Where the bubbles burst and shiver,
While the great thoughts live for ever
 Floating on the changing face ;
Down the flowing stream they fly,
Battling with adversity,
Or unmoved go grandly by,
 Calm, and victors in the race.

They, the poets of the past,
Spake, and lo ! their words will last,
In the tranquil hollow glassed,
 Or upon the circling foam
Riding, where some inward life
Beats the waters into strife ;
Where the depths with passion rife
 Speak a troubled spirit's home.

All our thoughts and actions flow ;
Trembling down the stream they go ;
Sink beneath or ever show
 Sparkling on the crest of Time ;
And, at times we backward gaze
Where, upon the river's face,
All the waters seem ablaze
 With a memory sublime.

Shadowed underneath the wood,
Lying in the darksome flood,
Like a spectre stained with blood,
 Hides some evil passion past :
Here where lulls the babbling stream,
Silvered with the falling beam,
Dwells the reflex of a dream
 Seen in youth that faded fast.

Here, methinks, the angers roll ;
Here the throbings of the soul
Shake the surface, and the whole
 Moveth like a living thing :

Joy and Sorrow, Hate and Love,
In the heaving bosom move,
And the waves are gold above
With the ceaseless glistening.

When we drift adown the tide,
Running far and stretching wide,
While the changing waters glide
Over ashes dim and cold ;
Is the past a track of light,
Or a shadow of the night,
Or a spot of holy light,
Like an angel-garment's fold ?

RETROSPECT.

LIFE seems at times one vast regret
 For something, unaccomplished yet,
 We should have done, and so we fret
 Our lives away :
 Or something we have rashly done,
 That better had been left alone—
 Been vexed, perhaps, with a loving one—
 Some distant day.

Some god-like purpose broken through ;
 Some yielding, when Temptation threw
 Her nets about us ; something new
 That slew the old ;
 The old, forsaken, lying dead,
 And yet not wholly vanquishèd,
 That met us ever as we fled,
 A spectre cold.

Some doubt of faith ; some broken trust ;
Some bitter word, we knew unjust,
To one who lieth low in dust—
So silent now :
The faith was proved, alas ! too well ;
The broken trust is broken still ;
And who shall now our sorrow tell
To one laid low ?

One vast regret ; one sorrow rife ;
One lifelong agony and strife ;
One yearning for the fuller life,
That comes so slow :
And then the hope to right the wrong ;
To heal the discord of the song ;
To feel, by full forgiveness, strong
Before we go.

A MEMORY.

Flower o' the valley that seest the lightning leap from
the rocks ;

Flower o' the valley that hearest the crackling of thunder
shocks ;

Flower o' the valley that bendest thy head to the rush of
rains,

Breathest thy scent to the mountains, pourest thy tears
to the plains.

Flower o' the valley that feelest the mist-woven clouds of
the height

Trail in their grandeur across thee, leaving thee holy
and white—

Thou, at the foot of the mountain, hearest, as if from the
dead,

Voice of mystical import that reach thee from overhead.

Thou, O sweet flower o' the valley, minglest not in the
wrath,
Scapest, yet seest, the flame of the white-furrowed
lightning path ;
Thee would I take to myself from the fury of torrent and
sun ;
Flower o' the valley I pluck thee, for thou dost remind
me of *one*.

"For with Thee is the well of life, and in Thy light shall we
see light."—PSALM xxxvi. 9.

LIFE from the Well of Life, more perfect light
In Thy Light, give us these, good Lord, we pray.

Life to the full, the ever-beating heart
Of boundless sympathy and throbbing heat
And unaccomplished, unassuaged desire ;
Undying life, that never groweth sere
Nor withereth till it bloom in fulness.

Light

In Thy Light, to discriminate the truth
From error, nor count wholly base nor black
The soiled whiteness of a lower world,
Or darkness flecked with heaven-rays.

Light to see,

And life to act and work beneath the light.

Thou hast the Well of Life ; Thou holdest all
The countless motions of the universe
Within Thy Fount. And Thou renewest life,
As Thou renewest light from day to day
To flood Thy waiting world.

Great Source of all,
First Cause, Sustainer through all timeless time,
Fathomless Well of Life and Fount of Light,
In one full stream Thou pourest forth Thyself.

We pray Thee give us thirst to deeply drink.

DROWNED.

AGHAST !

At *something* there in a pool—
A woman, finding rest at last,
'Mid pond-weeds green and cool :
And my head is sick, and my heart beats fast,
And the people think me a fool.

A face !

A face and a tangle of hair
In the wet weeds' cold embrace ;
A stony, yearning, helpless stare,
A craving look for God's good grace,
On the dead face lying there.

Her name ?

A woman, why ask ye more ?

Would ye tell the world the shame
Of her who this daughter bore?
Let her name perish (as hath her fame)
In the waters that close her o'er.

L

TO A. R. W.

THE gift of sight
God grant thee, so, across the years,
Through mist of doubt and rain of tears,
Shalt thou see light :

Life's fullest dower
Be thine, till every mortal sense
Shows poor beside thy affluence
Of spirit power :

And such degree
Of love be reached, that thou canst trace
God's beauty veiled in every face
That fronteth thee.

August 14, 1888.

THE SEARCH.

THOUGH doubt for not a moment rests,
And creeds in loveless strife are clanging,
And dead hopes show like empty nests
In Winter's naked hedges hanging ;—
Still, through the gloom that circles me,
My soul goes forth to find out Thee.

Thou walkest, as of old, the sea,
And still art on the mountain lonely ;
All perfect beauty is of Thee,
As Thou the Lord of Truth art only :
So, seeking truth in all I see,
I gather it as gift from Thee,

We turn to Thee in bitter pain,
And when our souls are steeped in shadow,
And when we long for sunlit plain,
Or cool, and sweetly swarded, meadow :

Thou art as these to those who flee,
In darkness or in drought, to Thee.

And when Death's waves are running high,
And of Thy might we ask a token,
Ere yet we perish utterly,
Thy "Peace, be still," again, is spoken :
And lo ! "a great calm" smoothes the sea,
In meek obedience to Thee.

O purple orchids of the Spring ;
O Summer's fuller wealth of blossom ;
O Autumn's golden offering ;
O Snowdrops white on Winter's bosom :
Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, see
Thy love for us, these gifts from Thee.

O help me, Lord, to find Thee near,
And, gaining this, to know Thee nearer,
And having found Thee very dear,
Still give Thy help to feel Thee dearer ;
Till all the mists that circle me,
Are melted at the sight of Thee.

April 11, 1873.

TO —.

ALL fair things meet about thee ; O most fair,
And chief and sweetest, where all loves are sweet
That lay themselves as offerings at thy feet,
Who dost thy womanhood so lightly wear
In its full wealth of beauty—with an air
Of native fitness. All the graces meet,
In rounded loveliness of form, complete
With that expression that thy features bear.
I almost fear to praise thee, for I know
How well-nigh helpless is all power of speech
To utter deepest thought, and, feeling so,
That words must ever fail their end to reach,
I fain would be content to sit me low,
And learn an eloquence thy love can teach.

July 14, 1887.

A SUMMER DAY.

Lo ! twice to-day God touched His heaven with flame,
And who regarded ? At the early break
He scattered golden wealth o'er sky and lake
In boundless affluence ; when evening came
He traced the mystery of His awful Name
In fiery characters, and many a flake
Of crimson, where the pillared poplars shake
Black in the west and so His light proclaim.
So God bestows, and we accept His light,
And barely marvel—'tis a common thing—
Or, looking lightly, soon forget it quite—
A sunbeam glancing from a swallow's wing—
Nor heed His Witness, set 'twixt night and night,
To Love that should not need such witnessing.

THE VISION OF GOD.

GOD strews His heaven with stars, His earth with flowers ;
So, overhead and underneath our feet,
We see or touch His tokens : O most sweet !
In His true Commonwealth, to know them ours
And all men's—we His children—lo ! He dowers
Our home with beauty, and about us meet
His precious things—a gold-paved heavenly street
Each humble pathway, did we use our powers.
Ah me ! the blessing of the pure in heart
Waits if we would but claim it ! Galahad
Beheld the Grail and, still, to those who give
Unsullied gaze, the mists roll back and part
About them, and they see—where all seemed sad—
The Beatific Vision—God—and live.

March 24, 1887.

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